Steve Yeh 3/23/13

Ms. Schiller Ashes of Roses/Shabana Basij-Rasikh Courage Essay

Diane de Poitiers once stated her interpretation of courage: “Courage is as often the outcome of despair as of hope, in the one case we have nothing to lose, in the other everything to gain.” Likewise, de Poitiers meant that both optimism and sadness leads to courage, in which there is a time when there is nothing to lose, also said, everything to gain. Diane de Poitiers’s quote has a strong connection with both Ashes of Roses as well as “Shabana Basij-Rasikh: Dare to Educate Afghan Girls”. Rose Nolan of Ashes of Roses and Shabana Basij-Rasikh both showed great courage in their times of “despair”, when they had “nothing to lose” and “everything to gain”. In addition, they were both motivated by others close to them, which in turn gave them enough hope and courage to persevere through their adversities. In conclusion, Diane de Poitiers’s quote clearly stated the meaning of courage which was put through action by both Rose Nolan and Shabana Basij-Rasikh.

In Ashes of Roses, Rose Nolan was motivated by her friend and mentor, Gussie Garoff. At first, Gussie motivated Rose to go back and confront Mr. Moscovitz. Mr. Moscovitz had cheated Rose out of her week’s pay and even assaulted her. Even though Rose “felt sick to her stomach” (pg. 144) and “dropped to her knees and vomited on the ground” (pg. 144), Gussie persuaded and urged her on to stand up to Mr. Moscovitz. Rose got her week’s pay and “broke open a hornet’s nest” (pg. 146) as Gussie said of it. Most of the girls were yelling and Mr. Moscovitz’s shop was out of control when Rose and Gussie left. Also, Gussie helped Rose find a job with her at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Since Rose didn’t have a job after the incident with Mr. Moscovitz, Gussie got Rose a sewing machine with the help of Jacob Gerstein, which Rose practiced on. Rose became ready after a week’s practice, and thanks to Gussie’s help, she got a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. As a result of Gussie’s relentless aid, after Gussie’s death, Rose decided to join the labor union as Gussie did. She wanted to assist other greenhorns as Gussie did to her. Another effect of Gussie’s support of Rose, Rose decided she had enough courage to support herself in America. Rose determined to “tell everybody who would listen” about the fire that killed her best friend. Rose also became unwavering about fighting for worker’s rights. All in all, because of Gussie’s help, Rose matured, flourished and was motivated to make a change in America.

In Shabana Basij-Rasikh’s experience in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, she is motivated by her family to continue her education. Initially, Shabana grew up in a family who believed in education for their children, even though the Taliban outlawed schooling for females. Her father always encouraged her to persist on with her education. When Shabana wanted to quit because of the risks of being caught by the Taliban, her father told her “if we have to sell our blood to pay your school fees, we will.” (4th Paragraph) Furthermore, her father motivated Shabana by sharing his elation with her when she could go to “a real school now” (2nd Paragraph) by learning of it on the radio. He meant that Shabana wouldn’t need to dress up as a boy to go to school. Shabana would feel more comfortable and at ease now she could go to school without the caution of being caught by the Taliban. Hence, Shabana continued her education in Afghanistan. She graduated from high school and moved onto Middlebury College in the United States. Also, Shabana became the global ambassador of 10x10, a global organization fighting to educate women. She even co-founded SOLA, which became the first boarding school in Afghanistan for girls. As a final point, the motivation by Shabana’s family, particularly her father, lead to her success in education and even caused her to help other women seeking an education.

Diane de Poitiers’s quote clearly is applicable to both Ashes of Roses and “Shabana Basij-Rasikh: Dare to Educate Afghan Girls”. In Ashes of Roses, Rose gets courage as a result of despair and her resilience. After Mr. Moscovitz assaulted her, Rose felt extremely weak. With the help of Gussie Garoff, she gathered enough strength to ultimately stand up for herself, and as a result, Rose even won back her pay. Also, during the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, she lost three of her best friends, Rose Klein, Rose Bellini and Gussie Garoff. She felt she had the courage to “go to reach out and grab this new life in America with all my strength, because she was brought here for a purpose” (pg. 246). Rose felt that her purpose was to make sure her friends weren’t forgotten, that Klein, Bellini and Gussie did not die in vain. She felt it was her duty to say “about what had happened at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company” (pg. 246) for her friends and the others who perished in the fire, that the Triangle Factory owners compromised the workers’ safety, quality of the time working and ultimately their lives to the fire. Rose, at the end, truly did have “nothing to lose” meaning she lost everything already, Gussie, Rose Bellini and Rose Klein; she in turn had “everything to gain”. In Shabana Basij-Rasikh’s experience, Shabana, as said in de Poitiers’s, acquires courage as an outcome of hope. In Taliban-restricted Afghanistan, Shabana is only able to go to school dressed as a boy; schooling for girls was made illegal. Shabana obtained hope and courage by her family. Her father urged her to continue her education, despite the risks. Shabana’s father had hoped for education for all of his children, believing that “there was greater risk in not educating his children” (Paragraph 3). In addition, Shabana learned of a man whose daughter is a student of hers, “Ahmed”, had been threatened and nearly killed by a roadside bomb placed by the Taliban. Shabana was encouraged by Ahmed’s act of defiance and of hope for his daughter to be educated. Ahmed said, “Kill me now, if you wish, but I will not ruin my daughter’s future because of your old and backward ideas” (Paragraph 3, 2nd Page). Shabana’s experiences are undoubtedly affirmed by de Poitiers’s quote, stating that “courage is as often the outcome of… hope”. To conclude, Diane de Poitiers’s quote unmistakably described the coming of courage in both Ashes of Roses and in “Shabana Basij-Rasikh: Dare to Educate Afghan Girls”.

Diane de Poitiers’s quote stated perfectly what happened in Ashes of Roses and in “Shabana Basij-Rasikh: Dare to Educate Afghan Girls”. In both stories, the main characters, Rose Nolan and Shabana showed great courage and resilience, bouncing back from when their self-esteem and self-respect was very low. Even though Rose and Shabana both faced adversities, they always persevered through them. They showed tremendous courage in times of need of themselves and others. Both Shabana and Rose were motivated by others, which in turn made them stronger and presented the courage they had inside of them, whether when it was at a time of hopelessness or of optimism, whether it was when they had “nothing to lose” or “everything to gain”. In a final analysis, both Rose and Shabana showed courage in times described in Diane de Poitiers’s quote, “Courage is as often the outcome of despair as of hope, in the one case we have nothing to lose, in the other everything to gain.”